



Rhythm Section Roles (in standard swing)

- **Bass:** Provide a solid metric and harmonic foundation by creating a quarter-note based melody with the roots and/or fifths of each chord occurring on downbeats and chord changes.
 - Ideal sound is plucked upright bass. Proper attack of note in right hand, clarity of center and sustain in left hand are key.
 - Create walking bassline by starting on root of chord and approaching subsequent roots or fifths by V-I resolution, half-step, or logical diatonic/chromatic motion or sequence.
- **Drums:** Assist bass in providing solid metric foundation, provide subdivision and stylistic emphasis, and drive dynamics and phrasing.
 - *Right Hand:* Primary responsibility is ride cymbal playing ride pattern.
 - Fundamental of ride pattern is quarter-notes with eighth-note subdivision added as desired, needed, and appropriate for dictation of swing.
 - Think of playing approximately ½” through cymbal to provide clarity and emphasis.
 - *Left Foot:* Play hi-hat on beats 2 and 4 for emphasis of fundamental syncopation.
 - Keep heel off the ground.
 - Cymbals should be approx. 1” apart.
 - *Left Hand:* Free to provide stylistic emphasis.
 - Cross-stick hits on beat 4 with bead of stick on drum head and shaft of stick striking rim of snare.
 - Musically logical “fills” on snare, toms, etc. to emphasize or set-up written figures or improvised solo moments.
 - *Right Foot:* Play bass drum.
 - Optionally “feather” bass drum as quarter notes to emphasize bassline by lightly hitting bass drum. Felt not heard, should not be louder than bass.
 - Use to emphasize ends of fills and set-up syncopation by playing downbeat before a syncopated entrance.
- **Piano/Guitar:** Provide harmonic definition and rhythmic support
 - Define 3rd and 7th of chord in voicings.
 - Avoid root and 5th (bass is already playing).
 - Stay in middle range (above bass and below melody).
 - Guitar try to avoid strings 1 and 6, open strings, and above 12th fret.
 - Extensions as indicated in chord symbol or from key.
 - Resolve voicings appropriately.
 - Play rhythmically appropriate for style (“comping”):
 - Guitar may play quarter-notes a la Freddie Green
 - Both play long and short notes, riffs (repeated rhythms), and try to find spaces in the melody.